

[19 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

conditions there and by when it is likely to be completed and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) In recent earthquake on 26th January 2001 in Gujarat 89 persons were killed at Air Force Station, Bhuj, which includes 29 Air Force personnel, 56 Dependants, 01 Ex-Serviceman and 03 Civilians. Relief work was undertaken, immediately and family members were evacuated by Service aircraft. Medical aid to the injured persons, temporary accommodation and food was also provided to the affected families.

(c) and (d) 194 dwelling units were destroyed or damaged. Construction of 130 married quarters, construction of single married accommodation and messes, special repairs of offices and married accommodation is under active consideration. In addition, action has been taken to provide desert coolers and fans for the tentage accommodation, housing personnel of Air Force Station Bhuj.

Collection of Hydrographic Data by US and British

3660. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report "US, UK ships caught snooping in India Waters" published in the Times of India dated 1st February, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction and since long US and British ships have been collecting the hydrographic data from Indian waters; and

(c) what steps proposed to taken to address the problems highlighted in the report and prevent the foreign hydrographic vessels from mapping Indian waters for future submarine operation in the area?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The US Navy Survey Vessel USNS Bowditch was detected on 28 November 2000 and the UK Royal Navy Vessel HMS

Scott was first detected on 6th December 2000 and again from 12—16 January 2001.

The Government regards the operation by the US and UK Naval Vessels within the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as violation of the United Nations Convention on the laws of the Sea III (UNCLOS III) and the Indian Maritime Zone Act 1997 as its prior approval was not obtained for conducting such operations. Protests have been lodged with both the concerned Governments and it has been conveyed that such activities without prior approval will not be permitted in the Indian EEZ.

Patrolling in Indian Ocean by Russian Warships

3661. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russian warships will patrol the Indian Ocean for the first time in almost a decade in order to project Russian Power and deter potential threats on all the world oceans;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have accorded necessary permission?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Samba Spying Case

3662. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken in the light of Delhi High Court ruling on the so called Samba Spying case exonerating all the nine Officers to compensate them for the ordeals including prolonged jail terms suffered by them and their families and to give justice to them; and

(b) what action has been taken against the Officers found responsible for the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Special Leave Petitions have filed in the Supreme